



# **PUBLIC SERVICE LEADERS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**



**Learn. Serve. Lead.**



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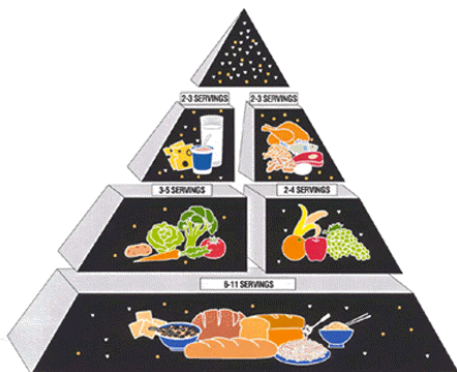
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## United States Department of Agriculture

In 1862, when President Abraham Lincoln founded the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), he called it the "people's Department." In Lincoln's day, 48 percent of the people were farmers who needed good seeds and information to grow their crops. Today, USDA continues Lincoln's legacy by serving all Americans. USDA remains committed to helping America's farmers and ranchers. But we also do much more:

- ✓ USDA leads the Federal anti-hunger effort with the Food Stamp, School Lunch, School Breakfast, and the WIC Programs.
- ✓ USDA is the steward of our nation's 192 million acres of national forests and rangelands.
- ✓ USDA is the country's largest conservation agency, encouraging voluntary efforts to protect soil, water, and wildlife on the 70 percent of America's lands that are in private hands.
- ✓ USDA brings housing, modern telecommunications, and safe drinking water to rural America.
- ✓ USDA is responsible for the safety of meat, poultry, and egg products.
- ✓ USDA is a research leader in everything from human nutrition to new crop technologies that allow us to grow more food and fiber using less water and pesticides.
- ✓ USDA helps ensure open markets for U.S. agricultural products and provides food aid to needy people overseas.



USDA's Food Pyramid Guide



USDA's Smokey Bear



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## Why Should You Consider a Career in Public Service?

Your next step is an important one. The job you choose will be the first step on your way to a meaningful career. Being a public servant is a demanding, yet rewarding, job. For the Federal Government to be efficient and effective, it needs the best and the brightest employees who want to serve their fellow countrymen and who are willing to share their knowledge, their skills, and their energy for the betterment of our nation. The contributions Federal employees make today, tomorrow, and in the future guarantee that America will remain the world leader and can successfully respond to the foreign and domestic challenges of the 21st century.

Want proof that you will make a difference? Just ask the men and women who are scientists, engineers, cartographers, and IT specialists who serve their country every day. They will tell you that their career in public service is stimulating and professionally satisfying. They enjoy competitive salaries and know that in return for a career in public service, a generous package of retirement and health benefits awaits. And that doesn't even touch on the "family-friendly" benefits that are available to Federal employees.

One of the most significant advantages of a career working for the Federal Government is that career training and development are part of the professional culture within the Federal workforce and there are real opportunities for advancement. And then there's the satisfaction that comes from knowing that you are making a difference. The career opportunities available to you as a Federal employee are endless. Once on board, the track you take and how far you want to go depends entirely upon you.

*"We know that global warming and tropical deforestation make wise management of wilderness areas, rivers, and national forests very important. Our decisions will affect many generations to come."*

*Susan Shalski, Forester*

*"I've had the chance to visit many parts of the world where U.S. food marketing assistance makes the critical difference."*

*Steve Mitoff, Marketer*

*"We provide irrigation system design and concepts to farmers that they can't get from the private sector either because they are expensive or too advanced."*

*Linda Rivero, Engineer*



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## **Program Description**

The USDA, in partnership with the Hispanic College Fund, is providing scholarship and internship opportunities designed to promote public service and to create access to higher education for undergraduate and graduate students.

### **The program offers:**

- ✓ Full-tuition scholarships for 2 years
- ✓ A paid internship (640 hours) leading to guaranteed permanent employment
- ✓ Employee benefits
- ✓ Mentoring, career development, and leadership training
- ✓ Use of a personal computer

### **Successful applicants are:**

- ✓ Committed to public service
- ✓ Leaders in their community
- ✓ Intellectually curious

Recipients of the program enter into an agreement with the USDA. Recipients receive full-tuition scholarships for two years. Prior to graduation, recipients intern at the USDA for a minimum of 640 hours. The internships are paid in addition to the scholarship funds. There are numerous ways to complete your internship hours prior to graduation. After graduation, recipients are required to work for the USDA for a minimum of 2 years. The full-time employment at the USDA is a guaranteed job upon graduation. For more information, please see the Frequently Asked Questions on page 11.



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## **Eligibility Criteria**

Each applicant must meet all of the following eligibility requirements:

- ✓ Be a U.S. citizen or be in the application process for U.S. citizenship
- ✓ Be in good academic standing with at least a cumulative 2.75 grade point average based on a 4.0 scale
- ✓ Have a strong interest in a career in public service with the USDA
- ✓ Meet major requirements of specific USDA agencies. (Please see listing of scholarship programs on page 10)
- ✓ Must be a junior for the academic year 2005-2006 or a graduate student. (Please see listing of scholarship programs on page 10)

## **Application Materials**

To be considered for the PSLS program you must submit the following materials:

- ✓ Scholarship application
- ✓ Essay
- ✓ Proof of application for U.S. citizenship if you are not currently a U.S. citizen
- ✓ Letter of Recommendation
- ✓ Official Transcript with cumulative GPA
- ✓ Resume

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Failure to include any of the above documents will result in automatic disqualification.



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## Application Procedures & Important Dates

May 14, 2004	<p><b>Application Deadline</b></p> <p>The application must be received by this deadline. You can submit your application by fax, email, or mail. If you submit your application by fax or email, please mail the rest of the documents including official transcript, letter of recommendation, resume, and proof of application for U.S. citizenship (if applicable)</p> <p>Fax to: 202-296-3774</p> <p>Email to: <a href="mailto:sa@hispanicfund.org">sa@hispanicfund.org</a></p> <p>Mail to: Hispanic College Fund, Inc. 1717 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Suite 460 Washington, DC 20006</p>
June 2004	<p><b>Interview Process</b></p> <p>USDA will screen the candidates through either a phone or in person interview. After the interview process, successful candidates will be matched with internship and employment positions.</p>
July 2004	<p><b>Notification of Applicants</b></p> <p>Each applicant will be notified by the agency who conducted their interview</p>
July 12-16	<p><b>Orientation for Selected Scholars</b></p> <p>All selected scholarship recipients will be required to attend an orientation in Washington, DC. (Your travel and lodging expenses will be paid by USDA). The orientation will feature an introduction to the USDA, leadership training, and mentorship from current USDA management.</p>



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## **Tips for Completing Your Application**

- ✓ Make sure that you complete your scholarship application on time and that you answer all of the questions.
- ✓ Check the list of scholarships offered at the end of this application packet and make sure you qualify for a scholarship program BEFORE you complete the application. There is no sense in completing an application for which you do not qualify.
- ✓ Read ALL instructions carefully. If there is something that you do not understand contact the Hispanic College Fund (HCF). HCF is administering this program for the USDA. You can contact HCF by calling Stina Augustsson at 1-800-644-4223 or emailing [sa@hispanicfund.org](mailto:sa@hispanicfund.org).
- ✓ Answer the essay question. Make sure you address all points of the question and that you proofread your essay prior to submission.
- ✓ Make sure your resume is current and relevant to this program.
- ✓ Ask someone to write your letter of recommendation NOW. You want to give that person as much time as possible to write a quality letter of recommendation.
- ✓ Request to have your transcript sent NOW. It can take up to two weeks to have official transcripts sent.



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## **Application Instructions**

To ensure your application is complete, we strongly recommend mailing all documents in one envelope in the order indicated below. All attachments must contain your full name and social security number.

### **Scholarship Application**

Complete and submit all sections of the application. Please include a printout of your essay.

### **Essay**

Submit a 500-800 word typed essay discussing why you want to work for the USDA.

### **Proof of Application for U.S. citizenship**

If you are in the process of applying for U.S. citizenship, please submit a copy of your application. If you are a U.S. citizen, you do not need to submit proof of citizenship.

### **Letter of Recommendation**

Submit ONE TYPED current letter of recommendation on college/university letterhead from your academic counselor, advisor, faculty member, or employer that addresses the Selection Committee specifically. Make sure that your letter of recommendation is from someone who knows you well and can speak to your abilities. The letter should tell us about your: 1) Personal strengths; 2) Leadership qualities; 3) Academic and extracurricular achievements; and 4) Future academic and career aspirations.

### **Transcript**

Submit an OFFICIAL college/university transcript indicating your most recent academic work including Fall semester 2003. Transcripts MUST include your cumulative GPA on a 4.0 scale. If your transcript does not show a cumulative GPA, request that a school official confirm this information on school letterhead with his or her signature.

### **Resume**

Please submit a current one-page resume. The resume will be used during the scholarship selection process as well as for internship opportunities.



# PUBLIC SERVICE LEADERS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

## Application (Part I)

Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_

### PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Mr.  
Ms.  
Mrs.

First Name	Middle Name or Initial	Last Name		
		( )		
Permanent Home (or Parents') Address	City	State	Zip	Home Phone
		( )		
Your Mailing Address (If not living with parents)	City	State	Zip	Your Phone
Email Address				

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
Month Day Year

Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
City State

Country of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Are you the first person in your family to attend college? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Citizenship: ☐ U.S. Citizen ☐ U.S. Permanent Resident

Ethnic background, optional, will not be used in any selection decision:

☐ American or Alaskan Native

☐ Black or African American

☐ Asian American

☐ Hispanic or Latino

☐ White American

### ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

In the Fall of 2004 I will be a college (Check **one**):

☐ Junior

☐ Graduate

College/University You Will Be Attending in Fall 2004

Will you be a transfer student this fall? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Campus

Cumulative GPA as of Fall 2003 (on a 4.0 scale) \_\_\_\_\_

Address

What is your expected year of graduation? \_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip

What is your major? \_\_\_\_\_

### USDA AGENCY OF INTEREST

Please indicate using the scholarship code what scholarship you are interested in receiving\*:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\*You may put up to three selections. Please put these selections in order of preference. If you are only interested in receiving a scholarship from one USDA Agency & Location, please put only that code.



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## Application (Part II)

Social Security Number \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_

### COST OF EDUCATION

#### Academic Expenses

Full year tuition and fees\* \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Books and supplies \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Other Expenses \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Expenses \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please include only fees listed as mandatory by your college or university.

#### Scholarship Awards

Please list scholarship awards you anticipate receiving for the 2004-2005 academic year. Please check how you can use those funds. You may check more than one option.

_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuition & Fees	<input type="checkbox"/> Books & Supplies	<input type="checkbox"/> Room & Board	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuition & Fees	<input type="checkbox"/> Books & Supplies	<input type="checkbox"/> Room & Board	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuition & Fees	<input type="checkbox"/> Books & Supplies	<input type="checkbox"/> Room & Board	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuition & Fees	<input type="checkbox"/> Books & Supplies	<input type="checkbox"/> Room & Board	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuition & Fees	<input type="checkbox"/> Books & Supplies	<input type="checkbox"/> Room & Board	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

### STUDENT EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND AWARDS

List Academic Honors & Awards you received:


List Volunteer, Community, and Athletic Activities you participated in:


### RECRUITMENT

I learned of the PLSL Program by:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> USDA HSINP Web Page   | <input type="checkbox"/> Professor              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic College Fund | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Member/Friend   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Advisor      | <input type="checkbox"/> USDA Contact           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Career Center         | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): _____ |

### ESSAY - Please Type

Submit a 500-800 word typed essay discussing why you want to work for the USDA.



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## List of Scholarships

Scholarship Code	USDA Agency	Discipline	Job Title	Location	Level	Length of Scholarship
PSLS-01	Natural Resources Conservation Service	Civil Engineering Agronomy Environmental Science Wildlife Biology Natural Resources	Student Trainee	West Virginia	Undergraduate	Two-Years
PSLS-02	Natural Resources Conservation Service	Civil Engineering Agronomy Environmental Science Wildlife Biology Natural Resources	Student Trainee	Tennessee	Undergraduate	Two-Years
PSLS-03	Natural Resources Conservation Service	Civil Engineering Agronomy Environmental Science Wildlife Biology Natural Resources	Student Trainee	Iowa	Undergraduate	Two-Years
PSLS-04	Natural Resources Conservation Service	Civil Engineering Agronomy Environmental Science Wildlife Biology Natural Resources	Student Trainee	Oregon	Undergraduate	Two-Years
PSLS-05	Natural Resources Conservation Service	Civil Engineering Agronomy Environmental Science Wildlife Biology Natural Resources	Student Trainee	Louisiana	Undergraduate	Two-Years
PSLS-06	National Agricultural Statistics Service	Agricultural Economics Math Science	Student Trainee	Las Cruces, NM	Undergraduate	Two-Years
PSLS-07	National Agricultural Statistics Service	Agricultural Economics Math Science	Student Trainee	Orlando, FL	Undergraduate	Two-Years
PSLS-08	Foreign Agricultural Service	Agri-Business Economist International Policy	Agricultural Policy Economist	Washington, DC	Graduate	Two-Years
PSLS-09	Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service	Water Quality Air Quality Range Grassland Ecosystem Environmental Science	Program Analyst	Washington, DC	Graduate	Two-Years
PSLS-10	Farm Service Agency	Science Agricultural Economics Agriculture Engineer Business Computer Information System Management Accounting	Loan Specialist	Tennessee	Undergraduate	Two-Years
PSLS-11	Farm Service Agency	Science Agricultural Economics Agriculture Engineer Agronomy Computer Information System Animal Science Forestry	Loan Specialist	New Mexico	Undergraduate	Two-Years
PSLS-12	Farm Service Agency	Science Agricultural Economics Agriculture Engineer Agronomy Computer Information System Management Accounting Animal Science Forestry	Loan Specialist	Pennsylvania	Undergraduate	Two-Years
PSLS-13	Farm Service Agency	Business Administration Accounting	Accountant	Saint Louis, MO	Undergraduate	Two-Years
PSLS-14	Farm Service Agency	Agricultural Economics Agronomy Computer Information System Economics Marketing Science Food Science & Technology	Agricultural Marketing Specialist	Kansas City, MO	Undergraduate	Two-Years
PSLS-15	Farm Service Agency	Business Administration Computer Information System	IT Specialist	Kansas City, MO	Undergraduate	Two-Years
PSLS-16	Farm Service Agency	Business Administration Accounting Computer Information System Science Human Resources Mathematics Social Science History Sociology	Agricultural Program Specialist	Maryland	Undergraduate	Two-Years



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## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **I am not from one of the states listed. Do I still qualify?**

Yes, you can be from anywhere in the United States or Puerto Rico and qualify for this scholarship program. The locations listed next to the agency and job titles are where your job and internship will be located. Your supervisor will assist you in locating housing. The housing will need to be paid by you from your internship funds. After graduation, the agency may assist you with relocation fees. Each agency varies in what it can assist you with. You will be able to work out these details with your supervisor.

### **What does the USDA PSLS award cover and how will it be distributed?**

As a recipient of this award, the USDA agency will cover the tuition of your college or university, any mandatory university fees, and books. The scholarship checks will be mailed directly to your university.

### **What are the requirements for the internship?**

You must complete a minimum of 640 hours (which is 80 days) at the USDA prior to graduation. This requirement is from the federal government and cannot be waived. The internship hours can be completed throughout the year and there are a variety of ways to complete your hours.

### **How can I complete my 640 internship hours prior to graduation?**

There are a number of ways to complete your internship hours. The exact schedule will be worked out between you and your supervisor. You could complete some hours this summer and finish the remaining hours next summer. You could complete some hours this summer and complete the remainder in fall by taking a semester off from school. You could decide to take a semester off from school in the spring and complete your internship hours during spring and summer of 2005.

### **I know I have guaranteed employment at the USDA and that there is a two year commitment to work for the USDA in addition to the internship. When do the two years begin?**

The two year commitment for full-time employment begins after graduation. If you complete more than 640 hours of internship, you will be paid for the additional hours you work but that time will not go towards your two year commitment. Your commitment begins post-graduation.



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## **Frequently Asked Questions (Continued)**

### **Am I paid for the internship?**

Yes, your internship is a paid internship. These funds are paid separately from your scholarship award. Through this program you will receive the full-tuition scholarship described above as well as payment for your internship.

### **I am currently a US permanent resident. Do I qualify?**

To be eligible for this program, you need to be in the process of applying for US citizenship. You are eligible to apply as a US permanent resident, but you should expect to become a US citizen within the next year. The USDA will work with you concerning your citizenship process, but you must be a US citizen prior to starting permanent employment with the USDA.

### **I receive other scholarships that are limited to tuition and fees. How does that affect my application or my eligibility?**

If you currently receive other scholarships that are restricted to tuition and fees and you receive the USDA PSLS award, then you will be asked to give back your other scholarships. Since the USDA will pay for all of your tuition and mandatory fees, the USDA asks that you allow the organizations sponsoring your other scholarship awards to give those funds to another deserving student. If you are already receiving a full-tuition scholarship, then you are not eligible to apply.

### **What happens if I decide to leave the program?**

If you decide to leave the program prior to completing your internship or two years of employment, then you will need to repay the USDA for the scholarship funds that were distributed to you.

### **Where can I find more information about USDA?**

To find more information about USDA and specific agencies, please visit the following websites:

- U.S. Department of Agriculture ([www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov))
- Natural Resources Conservation Service ([www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov))
- Foreign Agricultural Service ([www.fas.usda.gov](http://www.fas.usda.gov))
- National Agricultural Statistics Service ([www.usda.gov/nass](http://www.usda.gov/nass))
- Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service ([www.reesusda.gov](http://www.reesusda.gov))
- Farm Service Agency ([www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov))